

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF February 7, 2012 MEETING**

Board Members Present: Maureen Martin, Acting Chair; and Michael Lewis.

Other Committee Members Present: John Flaherty; Kevin Flynn; Steve Devine; Michael Walker; Christopher Kearns and Paul Harrington

Absent: Stephen Durkee; Everett Stewart; and Margaret Holland McDuff.

Also Present: Charles Odingbe; Mark Therrien; Amy Pettine; Thomas Deller; Brett Wallace; Anne Galbraith; Ellen Mandly and members of the public whose names are on the meeting sign-in sheet.

Acting Chair Maureen Martin called the meeting to order at 8:32, introduced herself and asked if the members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the meeting held May 5, 2011. Ms. Mandly interjected that the 2011 Strategic Planning Committee had some different members than those present today. The minutes before the Committee for approval today are almost identical to the Strategic

Planning Committee report given by Strategic Planning Committee Chair Thomas Deller at the full Board of Directors meeting held on May 19, 2011. Ms. Mandly was present at the May 5, 2011 meeting and attested that these minutes are a true and accurate reflection of that meeting.

Michael Lewis moved to accept the meeting minutes recognizing Ms. Mandly's characterization and based upon his attendance at the May 2011 Board of Director's meeting. Kevin Flynn seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved as stipulated by Mr. Lewis.

Next Ms. Martin asked if the members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the meeting held January 5, 2012. The members indicated that they had. Ms. Martin noted a correction in the attendees list then asked if there were any other comments. Michael Lewis moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Ms. Martin asked for a seconded and Kevin Flynn seconded. Mr. Lewis then read the remark attributed to him on the last line of the first page regarding RIPTA coordinating full transit for the State and said he stands by the remark in concept, but does not want that remark interpreted strictly. The minutes passed unanimously as amended and with Mr. Lewis' elucidation noted.

Amy Pettine addressed the Committee to give an update on the Core Connector Study to review report studies and to present a route,

vehicle and finance plan. Joining in the presentation was consultant Brett Wallace who is the project manager and consultant Anne Galbraith.

Ms. Pettine said at last month's Board of Directors meeting she gave a progress report and today she will give the alternatives analysis in more detail. The hope is that after her presentation today, the Strategic Planning Committee will vote to send a preferred analysis discussed today to the full Board of Directors for a vote at the next meeting. This is the next step in this process under FTA guidelines.

Ms. Pettine proceeded to discuss the timeline of the project thus far and what is to come. She said the proposed Providence streetcar is a local transportation circulator that will serve to unify neighborhoods surrounding Downtown as an interconnected destination for living, working and activities. The street car will provide fixed-rail connectivity within the city giving passengers predictable service. The proposed route and technology emerged from extensive planning based on the overall goals of the project to help connect key activity centers and enable the state to grow through new development and enhance the livability of the city.

Next the preferred route was discussed among the staff and Committee members. After some lengthy discussion Michael Lewis and Christopher Kearns expressed concern that the route does not connect to the Providence train station. A discussion of how the routes were developed and the many meetings with various stakeholders on this issue ensued with staff members stressing that it is anticipated that the train station connection will be added at a

later phase. Messrs Lewis and Kearns remained skeptical and said more discussion is needed before proceeding to determine if the core connector routes before the Committee today are the right ones, and if the train station must be added during this phase.

Brett Wallace took over the presentation and went over each slide in a Powerpoint which discussed preferred technology, frequency of service, and fares. A lengthy discussion was held on how to grow service and add streetcar to the Providence area known as “knowledge economy” i.e. the hospitals, and universities and the jewelry district area which has been freed up for development and economic growth since the move of the highway.

Tom Deller who was in attendance at the meeting stood at this point and gave a history of how the routes and proposed stations came to be selected and the reasoning behind these choices and also explained why, at this point in time, there is no route taking the streetcar to the train station.

Staff then discussed the project cost and finance strategy in the PowerPoint and said no funding commitments are made with the selection of the LPA however a reasonable financial plan must be in place. Increasingly a stronger commitment will be needed as the project advances through the project development process. By defining the LPA now, a rather focus can be placed on developing firm financial plans specific to the LPA.

A lengthy discussion of the specific routes and stations and the concept of a streetcar system generally ensued with all members of the committee fully participating. Following this discussion it was

determined that more discussion is needed at the Strategic Planning Committee level and that the Governor's office must be consulted further on this issue and how it plays into the Governor's plans for rail service. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Kearns offered to put this meeting together, and the Committee asked Ms. Mandly to schedule one more meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee in March before the Committee begins quarterly meetings.

There was no public comment nor was there any old business.

There being no further business Mr. Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Harrington seconded. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary